2008-09

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Tapestry

University of Toronto Women's Chorus
Robert Cooper, conductor
Edward Moroney, accompanist
Teresa Tang, student conductor

Friday, November 21, 2008
7:30 pm. Victoria College Chapel

Program

GLORIA — **Carl-Bertil Agnestig** (b. 1924)

BLAGOSLOV I, DUSHE MOYA, GHOSPODA — **Pavel Chesnokov** (1877 – 1944)

Spotlight
Sasha Chaplygina: Elegy (Rachmaninoff)

LAUDA SION — **Gyorgy Orban** (b. 1947)

Spotlight
Laura Widgett: An Die Musik (Schubert)

MUSIC FOR AWHILE — **Henry Purcell** (1659 – 1695)
Solo: Tessa Talbot-Laengert — **arr. Gunnar Eriksson**

Spotlight
Jialing Zhu & Valentina Sardovski: Hungarian Dance (Brahms)

GAVOTTE — **Edvard Grieg** (1843 – 1907)
arr. Carl-Bertil Agnestig

MISSA BREVIS in C MINOR — **Imant Raminsh** (b. 1943)
Kyrie (Soloists: Adanya Dunn, Laura Widgett)
Gloria (Soloists: Kelly Semkiw, Jingbai Li)
Sanctus / Benedictus (Soloist: Laura Widgett)
Agnus Dei (Soloists: Laura Widgett, Jingbai Li)

Spotlight
Sarah Moore: She Never Told Her Love (Haydn)
Anna Sharpe: Die Bekehrte (Wolf)

CHOOSE SOMETHING LIKE A STAR — **Randall Thompson** (1899 – 1984)

Spotlight
Petya Stavreva: Liebestod (Wagner – Liszt)

FIVE HEBREW LOVE SONGS — **Eric Whitacre** (b. 1970)
Temuná (A picture)
Kalá Kallá (Light Bride)
Lárov (Mostly)
Éyze shélag! (What snow)
Rakút (Tenderness)
Rachelle Luk, violinist

IT WAS A LOVER AND HIS LASS — **Ward Swingle** (b. 1927)

UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CHORUS

Program Notes

Gloria
CARL BERTIL-AGNESTIG

This innovative and miniature representation of the *Gloria* text for women's voices by the prolific Swedish composer Carl Bertig-Agnestig, encapsulates, in only a few measures the spirit, joy, reverence and mystery of this ancient *hymnus angelicus*. Each person of the Holy Trinity is addressed (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and each phrase of supplication and thanks (*Laudamus Te*, We praise thee; *Benedicimus te*, We Bless thee; *Adoramus te*, We worship thee; *Glorificamus te*, We glorify thee) receives its own individualized harmonization. But most inspired is Agnestig's communal expression of thanks (*Gratias Agimus Tibi*) where the lower voices peel their notes of thanks in their own personal manner while above floats the higher voices acknowledging the Son of the Father (Filius Patris) in angelic strains.

Lauda Sion
GYORGY ORBAN

This great medieval Eucharistic hymn was originally composed c.1264 by the Dominican friar and theologian St Thomas Aquinas. From the outset one can hear in his jubilant setting, by the Hungarian composer Gyorgy Orban, that same tone of celebration in his vibrant rhythmic repetitions of "lauda" (Praise, O Sion) embellished with reiterations of 'la-la-la' to add further excitement to this hymn of praise. This hyper-charged opening gives way to a more passionate and lyrical expression "Laudis thema specialis" (A special theme of praise). Finally this too is soon overtaken by the insistent exclamations, culminating in a final ecstatic "la-u-da-la-la-la-la-la-u-da!'

Missa Brevis
IMANT RAMINSH

There are many fine *Missa Brevis* settings for Ladies voices, but Canadian composer Imant Raminsh's beautifully haunting and melodic setting is surely one of the very best. The opening *Kyrie*, introduces the lyrically sensitive theme for chorus and solo which becomes the cornerstone for the entire *Missa Brevis*. The *Gloria in excelsis*, written for double choir, is more challenging and opens with triumphant triads. The middle *Qui Tollis Peccata mundi* (thou that takest away the sins of the world) is suggestive of the opening plaintive c minor melody. The brilliant and buoyant fugue, *Cum Sancto Spiritu*, brings to a close this sparkling movement in extraordinary fashion. After a buoyant opening, *Sanctus* (Holy) turns to a more reflective *Benedictus* (Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord) and closes with a jaunty fugal setting of *Hosanna in Excelsis*. The final *Agnus Dei* (O Lamb of God) hearkens back to the gentle *Kyrie* movement, and closes the circle on Raminsh's lyrical and joyous expression of faith.

Music for a while
HENRY PURCELL

Music for a while is a composition for solo voice by the English Baroque composer Henry Purcell from his incidental music to *Oedipus*. Thanks to the ingenious and understated setting by Swedish arranger and improviser, Gunnar Eriksson, this Purcell vocal classic is now in a form suitable to multiple voices while maintaining the sublime integrity of the original work.

Music for a while
Shall all your cares beguile:
Wond'ring how your pains were eas'd
And disdaining to be pleas'd
Till Alecto free the dead
From their eternal bands,
from her head,
And the whip from out her hands.

Choose Something Like A Star
RANDALL THOMPSON

Frostiana was commissioned by the town of Amherst, Massachusetts to commemorate its bicentennial in 1959. The town asked for a setting

of some poetry of Robert Frost, one of America's leading 20th-century poets and a four-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize who had lived and worked there for years. American composer and educator Randall Thompson chose seven Frost poems and constructed a seven-movement suite known as *Frostiana*: *The Road Not Taken*, *The Pasture*, *Come In*, *The Telephone*, *A Girl's Garden*, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* and *Choose Something Like a Star*.

Thompson's own adaptation of *Choose Something Like A Star*, for women's voices, is the last movement in *Frostiana* and was originally written for mixed choir. The text was drawn from *Steeple Bush* (1947) by Robert Frost. People often study this poem with John Keats's *Bright Star* as both poems characterize one goal – stay firm to what you believe. The difference is that Keats holds on to 'the star' no matter what happens, while Frost queries whether one should follow 'the star' when it is uncommunicative and incomprehensible. Some speculate that this poem reflects Frost's political view because of his close association with the Kennedys in the 60s, and see it as a message that expresses Frost's frustration at some political leaders who failed to communicate with their supporters.

Both Thompson and Frost were present for the premiere performance on October 18, 1959. At the conclusion of *Choose Something Like A Star*, Frost rose spontaneously from his seat and bellowed, "Sing that again!"

O Star (the fairest one in sight),
We grant your loftiness the right
To some obscurity of cloud --
It will not do to say of night,
Since dark is what brings out your light.
Some mystery becomes the proud.
But to be wholly taciturn
In your reserve is not allowed.
Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat.
Say something! and it says 'I burn.'
But say with what degree of heat.
Talk Fahrenheit, talk Centigrade.
Use language we can comprehend.
Tell us what elements you blend.
It gives us strangely little aid,
But does tell something in the end.
And steadfast as Keats' Eremite,
Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

Five Hebrew Love Songs
ERIC WHITACRE

Recognized as one of Americas foremost composers of choral music today, especially for a cappella works, Five Hebrew Love Songs marks a significant departure for Whitacre, who has set these choral snapshots for paino and solo violin accompaniment. Inspired by Whitacre's trip to Switzerland – Five Hebrew Love Songs is a suite of "postcards," capturing lush, romantic moments in full bloom. The songs are dedicated to Jerusalem born Hila Plitmann – poet of the beautiful text, and the Whitacre's wife. The first song, *Temuna* (A Picture) depicts the refined and subtle love inside a person's heart, just like an imprint left in one's mind. The second song, *Kala Kalla* (Light Bride) describes a newly married man's expectation for love, and exquisitely expresses his eagerness for love. The third song, *Larov* (Mostly) uses roof and sky as the main characters, and tactfully takes the close distance between them as a metaphor for the subtle distance between two lovers, which is both close and far. The fourth song, *Eyze Sheleg!* (What Snow!) associates the falling snowflakes with the frequently appearing perfect hopes, just like the joy of love approaching trippingly. The fifth song, *Rakut* (Tenderness) depicts the simple, honest, sincere and direct love that cannot be described by more words.

I. Temuná
A picture is engraved in my heart;
Moving between light and darkness:
A sort of silence envelops your body,
And your hair falls upon your face just so.

II. Kalá kallá
Light bride
She is all mine,
And lightly
She will kiss me!

III. Lárov
"Mostly," said the roof to the sky,
"the distance between you and I is
endlessness;
But a while ago two came up here,
And only one centimeter was left between us."

IV. Éyze shéleg!
What snow!
Like little dreams
Falling from the sky.

V. Rakút
He was full of tenderness;
She was very hard.
And as much as she tried to stay thus,
Simply, and with no good reason,
He took her into himself,
And set her down
In the softest, softest place.

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Biographies

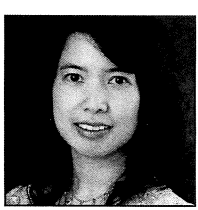
One of Canada's foremost choral conductors, **Robert Cooper C.M.** is currently Artistic Director of Chorus Niagara, Orpheus Choir of Toronto, the Opera in Concert Chorus, and the Faculty of Music Women's Chorus, University of Toronto.

Mr. Cooper has had the honour of conducting the National Youth Choir of Canada and made his Carnegie Hall debut in 1997 for a Celebration of Canadian Choral Music. He has conducted symphony orchestras in Halifax, Winnipeg, Edmonton and London (ON), opera companies in Victoria, Ottawa and Winnipeg, leading choirs across Canada, as well as Toronto Operetta Theatre and Opera in Concert. Acknowledged as an innovative programmer, Mr. Cooper has also commissioned and premiered many new works by both Canadian and international composers.

Mr. Cooper has adjudicated the international choral competition *Let The Peoples Sing* on many occasions, guest conducted Newfoundland's Festival 500, Parry Sound's Festival of the Sound, the 2007 Ontario Youth Choir, and Ottawa's Thirteen Strings to which he returns once again in December 2008 to conduct works by Haydn and Britten. In addition to his work as a popular clinician, Mr. Cooper will conduct Toronto Operetta Theatre's spring production of *Iolanthe*.

Mr. Cooper recently left CBC Radio Two after 31 years of bringing fine choral music and operatic performances to all of Canada as Executive Producer of Opera and Choral Music. He has served as President of the Ontario Choral Federation and the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors and presently serves on the Board of Directors of Chorus America.

Robert Cooper is the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from Brock University for his significant contribution to the Canadian choral community and is a member of the Order of Canada.



Teresa Tang holds a Licentiate in piano performance at the Trinity College of Music, London and a Bachelor of Music from McGill University where she studied piano with Marina Mdivani, Tom Plaunt and Zabel Manoukian. She is pursuing her Masters degree in Conducting at the University of Toronto under the mentorship of Professor Doreen Rao and Professor Lori-Ann Dolloff. She was the Assistant Conductor of the University of Toronto MacMillan Singers in 2007 and is the Assistant Conductor of the University Women's Chorus this year. Teresa has undertaken Conducting Master classes with Helmuth Rilling, Weston Noble, James Jordan, Charles Bruffy and Bruce Chamberlain. She is a two-time recipient of the meritorious University of Toronto Fellowship and the Hong Kong Children's Choir Education Scholarship.

Prior to her studies at the University of Toronto, Teresa was a producer at the Radio Television Hong Kong (Radio 4 – Classical Channel). Her published recordings include the *Huang Zi Choral Literature Collection* and *Hymns of Universal Praise* CD series. She has held conducting posts with The Hong Kong Children's Choir and the Pentecostal Lam Hon Kwong School Choirs and has been guest conductor of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Choir. She assisted in coaching a combined choir of 200 for the Sacred Music Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong in a rendition of Handel's Messiah in year 2000.

An active member of the International Federation for Choral Music and the Ontario Registered Music Teachers' Association, Teresa also served as music consultant in the Programs for the Gifted and Talented under the Faculty of Education at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2006.

Edward Moroney pursues his eclectic career as a church musician, accompanist, vocal coach and music educator in Toronto. A graduate of the University of Toronto in composition and vocal music education, he studied with Talivaldis Kenins, John Beckwith, Derek Holman, Oskar Morawetz and Lloyd Bradshaw. When a chorister at St. Michael's Cathedral, he studied organ with Victor Togni, and at the university, with Charles Peaker and Douglas Bodle.

Mr. Moroney is a former organ-scholar of St. Chad's College, Durham University (UK), and is a fellow of several learned societies and British music colleges. Throughout many years of accompanying, he has been associated with the Canadian Children's Opera Chorus as founding accompanist, the Canadian Opera Company, the Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir, the Bell'Arte Singers, and the Opera In Concert Chorus (1986-2007). Mr. Moroney accompanies the TMYC on two CDs (CBC label), the "Magic of Christmas", conducted by John Rutter, and "A

Christmas Carol", conducted by Robert Cooper. He has performed with many distinguished conductors, including Robert Cooper, Lloyd Bradshaw, Elmer Iseler, Martin Neary, John Rutter and Robert Sund, both in master classes, festivals, tours, operas, concerts and broadcasts.

At the University of Toronto, Mr. Moroney was the only studio accompanist employed by the legendary singer and voice teacher Irene Jessner. In 1973 he was awarded the first Leslie Bell Choral Conducting Scholarship (Ontario Arts Council), and was a recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal (Canada) in 2002. Mr. Moroney has been the organist-choirmaster at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Toronto since 1998, and the occasional organist of HM Chapel Royal of the Mohawk in Ontario. He continues as accompanist for the University of Toronto Women's Chorus and the Orpheus Choir of Toronto.

In the summer of 2007, Mr. Moroney was pleased to accompany the Ontario Youth Choir, under the conductorship of Robert Cooper. He has recently joined the staff of his alma mater, St. Michael's Cathedral Choir School, and accompanied them on tour to Prague (Czech Republic) in the summer of 2008 (International Competition of Men & Boys' Choirs).

University of Toronto Women's Chorus

Soprano 1
Patricia Nesci
Andrea Van Pelt
Kelly Semkiw
Deborah Grimmet
Tessa Talbot-Laengert
Sarah Moore
Jingbai Li
Laura Widgett
Jordan Robbins
Adanya Dunn
Rachelle Luk
Sahlia Wong
Gala Castanos
Teresa Tang

Soprano 2
Ainslie Drew-Brook
Ann Chau
Katelyn Syri
Grace (Byel) Kim
Pam Lum
Julie Kim
Ema Rose Craci
Sasha Chaplygina
Jialiang Zhu
Pinky Luk
Anna Sharpe
Amanda Chan
Emily Snellings
Morgan MacNeill

Alto 1
Jessica Turje
Cristina Hare
Florence Mak
Andrea Yau
Bogdana Verbenko
Barbara Lica
Caitlyn Butler
Jennifer Wlodarczyk
Valentina Sadouskaya

Alto 2
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Danbee Moon
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Emma Young
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Maria Jung
Sabina Kim
Jodie Lee
Petya Stavreva

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